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Intelligence—IV

Competent Personnel Held Key To Success—Reforms Suggested

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The current survey of the nation's intelligence agencies, which have been beset by factionalism and friction, can lead only to one major conclusion: that adequate personnel is the key to adequate intelligence.

The study now being conducted under the chairmanship of Allen W. Dulles must undoubtedly recognize this fact, even though it may make suggestions for improvements in organization and perhaps a redefinition of functional activities by the various agencies.

Personnel weaknesses undoubtedly are the clue to the history of frustration and disappointment, of friction and fiasco which have been, too largely, the story of our intelligence services since the war.

Present personnel, including many of those in the office of research and estimates of the Central Intelligence Agency, suffer from inexperience and inadequacy of background. Some of them do not possess the "global," objective mind needed to evaluate intelligence, coldly, logically and definitively. Others, in offices of operations or special operations in the CIA are chair warmers. Some—in CIA and service agencies—are "empire builders," anxious for prestige and rank.

Civilian Executive Urged

The first requirement is to induce into government service civilians of high capacity and willing anonymity. The CIA should be headed by a civilian, not by a military or naval man as its first three directors have been. Its senior executives and office chiefs should be largely civilian.

The concept that CIA could be staffed in large measure by service personnel and that the services would then owe greater loyalty and support to this agency because of their personnel stake in it has failed. The officers sent to CIA are not always the best and most of them have a psychological aversion to the duty; they consider themselves, in a professional sense, "lost."

Civilians, therefore, must be induced into CIA and into other government intelligence agencies, but they probably cannot be persuaded unless some of the restrictions of Civil Service are relaxed and more security and sense of accomplishment is provided. A corps of junior civilian intelligence experts might be established gradually by enlisting picked men from the colleges or graduate schools to serve four or five years in government intelligence work.

The best 10 per cent might, if they wished, make intelligence a career; the rest would return to civilian life—available, if necessary, for a later tour of duty or for service in an emergency. The services themselves must emphasize intelligence even more greatly than they have yet done and they

must provide a greater continuity of career and chance for promotion to officers who make intelligence their specialty.

Some Reforms Suggested

A solution of the personnel problem is of prime importance, but these additional reforms ought to be considered carefully:

1—A thorough house-cleaning of the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence agencies to rid the services of drones, incompetents and "empire-builders."

2—Reorganization of the CIA on a more efficient basis. The office of collection and dissemination probably ought to be eliminated or greatly reduced and the office of administration and management ought to be cut down; these two offices have become too much the tail that wags the dog. Friction between the vital offices of operations and special operations must be eliminated; these two offices probably ought to be combined under one head and reduced in size. Neither one needs an evaluation section as at present; these sections somewhat duplicate the work of the office of research and estimates. The latter office is a key to sound intelligence; it must be strengthened. One means of doing so and of eliminating duplication with the State Department is to transfer the State Department's intelligence analysts to CIA. The residue of the Office of Strategic Services was split up after the war between the Central Intelligence Agency (then the Central Intelligence Group) and the State Department. This, it is now clear, was a major mistake; the two ought to be rejoined.

Functions Need Redefining

3—The functional purposes of each of the government's intelligence agencies ought to be redefined clearly and unmistakably, but the CIA must be clearly established as the top-echelon agency with powers to coordinate the activities of all the others. Organizationally, the present structure seems sound; certainly it is better than any prior system. The CIA probably should continue to collect information by both overt and covert means as well as to analyze it. If, however, official approval should be given to the collection of secret information by spy rings operated by other agencies the "master mind" control of all such rings must be in the hands of the CIA.

4—Secret intelligence operations must be conducted on a broader and far more secure base than heretofore. The State Department's embassies and missions have offered "cover" up until now for nearly all overseas CIA activities, largely because this was the easiest way. But other types of "cover" can and must be provided. Ingenuity and secrecy are the keys to sound operational procedures.